



Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Holy Eucharist D

29 January 2023

The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio

Seeking to know and serve Christ
in loving service to the campus, the
community, and the world.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

Lessons

Lessons for Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Old Testament – Micah 6: 1-8

Psalm - 15 (Sung)

New Testament – I Corinthians 1: 18-31

Gospel – Matthew 5: 1-12



<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel



Matthew 5:1-12

WHEN JESUS SAW THE CROWDS, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Gospel Engagement Questions:

Which part of the Beatitudes is your favorite?

Why?

The Sermon

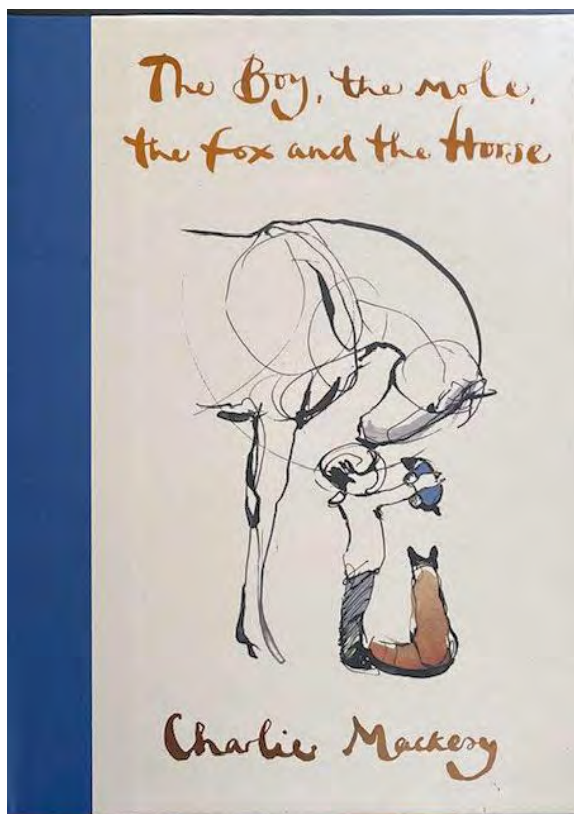
Words of Comfort

In the early days of the pandemic when many parts of the world were in

lockdown, lots of people took to social media to find community and company. While some posts tried to rally us with humor or sharing how they were adapting, many posts had an edge of anger or resentment. Into that milieu, an artist in Great Britain named Charlie Mackesy intentionally presented a very different message. Charlie has been a professional artist for over two decades, yet his art is not a thing unto itself; it is an extension of himself and his chosen mode of communication. Longtime friend Bear Grylls said when he was going through some of the most difficult times of his life, Charlie sent him little drawings that were a source of comfort for him because they made him feel less alone.

It was similar drawings, simple pictures with a few words, that Charlie Mackesy put on his social media. The pictures mostly featured four recurring characters: a young boy, a small mole, a shy fox, and a big horse. They didn't have adventures as much as they simply talked to each other in gentle affirming conversations.

That, said Charlie, was the point of his drawings, to start positive conversations with one another. The drawings did much more, they seemed to resonate, to be just what the world needed at the time. Soon people were sharing them with friends and before long people were leaving lovely comments about how the drawings were helping them get through a difficult time. The comments also asked when Charlie was going to publish a book.



Those comments were not missed by publishers, who reached out to Charlie and eventually published the book of his drawings aptly titled *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse*. Perhaps you are familiar with it. The book became a best-seller, with everyone from schoolteachers to celebrities reading the book to their students or audiences in person and online. Not surprisingly, the book was adapted into a lovely, animated movie recently nominated for an Academy Award.

Neither the book nor the movie is dramatic. There are no car chases, no explosions, no swearing, no cleverness, no villain to defeat. They are instead gentle conversations that center around love. Not romantic love, not love of possession, but the kind of love Jesus showed in his life, death, and resurrection, the love of God that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, which we heard a section of in our Gospel today.

The trouble with the Sermon on the Mount is that it can be either so familiar it loses its impact, or so unfamiliar it is difficult to relate to or understand. What was Jesus talking about when he said things like, “Blessed are those who mourn,” and “blessed are the meek”? Jesus seemed to be calling out the suffering or outcast in society and reversing their role as those cast aside for their inability to produce or conform to certain societal expectations. Usually when a person calls themselves blessed, they mean they are fortunate, they have what they want, they are happy, they are eating at expensive restaurants, going on exotic vacations, have a nice house, car, and family. They can pay all their bills and their bodies are in good shape, attractive even. But the people Jesus called blessed don't seem to fit that definition. And that, biblical scholars and commentators agree, was most likely, the point.

The Beatitudes are like the Magnificat in they turn the values we are most familiar with upside down. They challenge the assumption that humankind exists to consume and produce things to be consumed, and our value only comes from our physicality, abilities, or status. In God's kingdom, through God's eyes, value comes not from what we look like, or how physically fit we are, how much money we have, how many degrees we have, our age, if we are married or single, if we have children or grandchildren, or even how good we feel. What gives us value in God's eyes simply, like the message of Charlie Mackesy's drawings states and the Beatitudes describe, is being loved by God.

The Beatitudes are a message of comfort for the people who are grieving, who suffer from illness of body, mind, and spirit, who are frustrated by the lack of equality and justice in society, who are quiet, who seek to end conflicts instead of create drama. The comfort of the Beatitudes is the assurance suffering is not a punishment from God, nor what anyone deserves. In the Beatitudes there is the powerful and beautiful truth that suffering is the place where God and humanity can meet, that through Jesus, God meets us where we are, even when we suffer.

The Beatitudes can also be mistaken as a forecast of what life after death is like, which is sometimes used to justify unnecessary suffering in this life. That was not Jesus' intention. For example, Jesus wasn't saying if you grieve now, you won't grieve after you go to heaven. Instead, Jesus was lifting grief up by showing grief to be part of and an expression of love. The comfort promised is not the removal of sadness, it is the promise to come along side and be in the sadness together. Which is hard for people to do, even the most empathetic person. But it is part of Incarnation, of God becoming human to dwell with us. God did not become incarnate to punish us or recreate the world in our image, making what we want it to be, but to be with us in this world as it is, to remind us God's love is not for a few, but for us all.

There are sermons on the Beatitudes that direct us to look to those who suffer with compassion, which falsely assumes that those listening to or

reading those sermons don't need the comfort of the Beatitudes. If the past few years have taught us anything, it is that we all have suffered, perhaps differently or for different reasons, and in that suffering we can find a commonality, or a solidarity that can manifest in care for each other, empathy, and love. Perhaps there are times when we all need the comfort that is expressed in *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse* that the greatest strength is gentleness, that courage is asking for help, because that means we aren't giving up, or as Jesus said in the Beatitudes, the meek inheriting the earth. The book success is defined as love, and Jesus said the same thing when he said the pure in heart will see or recognize God. We all can give and receive such much-needed comfort and when we do, God's Kingdom comes a little closer.

I know the world isn't yet a place where the merciful receive mercy and are instead often taken advantage of. I know at times life is difficult, unfair, unjust, and can be cruel. But that doesn't mean we have to be. We can, like in Micah 6:8, do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. To help us figure out how to do this, we have, among the many gifts of God, Jesus' teaching called the Beatitudes, the blessings that can help us look for and identify when love really does manifest in the world. It can come from anywhere, like a kind and humble artist posting his drawings on social media, and from any of us. Even if this love doesn't mention God or Jesus directly, we can recognize it as holy by how it can ease the burdens or fears of life, making life a little less difficult and a little more beautiful because it reveals God is not far away, but is here with us. The way Charlie Mackesy said it, "Sometimes all you hear about is the hate, but there is more love in this world than you could possibly imagine."

A sermon by The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, Words of Comfort, 29 January 2023, at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio.

Sermon Engagement Questions:

Which of the Beatitudes would you choose to focus on for the next week or month?

How will you make that Beatitude a deeper part of your life?

Please include in your prayers

IN OUR WORLD, we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for all families and law enforcement affected by gun violence. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and we pray for all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

IN OUR DIOCESE, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

IN OUR PARISH, we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community.

THOSE WHOM OUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED: Al S., Bud and Carol, Chris L., Gloria R., Jean R., Lia, Miriam, Sharon, T.C., Ann Carswell, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Richard DeNune, Roy DePue, Norm Fox, Lindsey and Regina Golden, Debbie Hunsberger, Bob and Nancy Jackson, John Jefferson, Peter Kachenko and family, Ann Lloyd, Christine McGinn, Jeff Maiden, Julie Nehls, Betty Oltorf, Donald Oney, Sandy Oney, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Flo and Jack Roach, Annette Secoy, Dale Showman, Michael Vaughn, Mary-Anna Welch, and we pray for all who care for them. **

BIRTHDAY: Ruth Ann Clever (1/30), Michael Luelloff (1/31), Eli Redfern (2/2), Meara Shannon (2/4)

** Full names are normally not published online. However for the Sunday 10:30 service we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at **740-593-5098** or grahammowery@aol.com.

At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched anytime later.

<https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/ccj/online/>

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

Coming up on the Calendar

Sunday, February 5, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 5, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Burning palm branches)

Sunday, February 5, 2:00 p.m. - - Good Shepherd Annual Meeting (via Zoom)

Sunday, February 12, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 12, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, February 14, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting (Nehls Hall)

Sunday, February 19, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 19, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Sunday, February 19, 3:00 p.m. - - Celebration Concert II featuring our Choral Scholars and other guests.

Tuesday, February 21, 5:30 p.m. - - Pancake Supper

Wednesday, February 22, 11:30 p.m. - - Ashes to Go

Wednesday, February 22, 5:30 p.m. - - Service from Book of Common Prayer

Sunday, February 26, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 26, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, February 28, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting (Nehls Hall)

Coffee Hour Schedule

Feb 5 Lois Wagner

Feb.12 Dana Calrson

Open Dates for Altar Flowers

TBD

[To Altar Flower Procedure](#)

Notes & Announcements (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)

Nominating Committee Report

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to invite individuals to participate in the various positions overseeing the life and stages of the parish. This year's committee consisted of outgoing vestry members Anne Braxton, Doug Dygas, and Sharon Huge. Mother Deborah was chairperson and Senior Warden Alex Buckley served in support.

Senior Warden: Alex Buckley (may serve three consecutive one-year terms, this will be her third year)

Junior Warden: Deb Hillard (may serve three consecutive one-year terms, this will be her first year)

Treasurer: Allyn Reilly (may serve unlimited consecutive one-year terms)

Vestry: Elect two individuals to serve three-year term: Norm Fox and Malin Irwin

Delegates to Diocesan Convention: Anne Walker and Allyn Reilly
(We may send up to 4 delegates, the wardens automatically serve as other two delegates)

Alternate Delegates to Diocesan Convention: Lois Wagner and Curt Sherman (serve in case delegates cannot attend):

Annual Meeting Sunday, February 5 at 2:00 p.m.

Please join us for the annual meeting of the parish Sunday, February 5 at 2:00 pm. The meeting will be held on zoom to make it accessible for those concerned with weather and mobility challenges.

The purpose of the Annual Meeting is primarily to vote on new vestry, wardens, treasurer, etc. and be presented with the parish's budget for the year. We also express gratitude for the ministry that has been done over the

previous year and learn about upcoming events and programs.

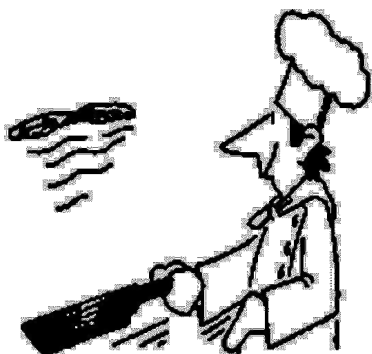
Looking forward to another year of ministry at Church of the Good Shepherd.



Burning of the Palm Branches Sunday February 19

On the last Sunday in the season of Epiphany, it is tradition to burn the palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday service to make the ashes that will be used on Ash Wednesday. Although we purchase ashes for the service, we can still practice the enjoyable tradition of burning palm branches. It's fun for all ages and an ancient practice in the church.

The Sunday service will conclude with the burning of the palm branches from last year's Palm Sunday service. If you still have your palm branches, remember to bring them that morning. If you can't be with us in person that day, feel free to drop last year's branches off at the church and we'll throw them in the fire for you.



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, February 21**. That's the day the great tradition of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday returns to Good Shepherd!!!

Since we're returning in a smaller version of former years, we'll only serve from 5:30-6:30. And our offerings will be a little different. We'll provide regular pancakes, gluten-free pancakes and coffee. We ask YOU to volunteer to bring butter, syrup, and juice.

We also need volunteers to help set up (beginning at 5), to cook, to serve and to help clean up.

Sign-up sheets are available in the Narthex and in Hobson.

Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023

Ashes to Go 11:30 – 12:30

Mother Deborah will be distributing ashes on the front porch of the church.

Service from the Book of Common Prayer 5:30 p.m.

Please join us as you are able for this lovely liturgy to begin the season of Lent.



Something to Look Forward To

A March Lenten Program - - "Practicing Compassion"

Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. (Nehls Hall downstairs)

[TO MORE DETAILS](#) Please consider joining us.

For Bishop Transition News and Updates

[-- Follow this link --](#)

If you want to help the folks who have been negatively impacted by climate disaster and war anywhere in the world (including Ukraine) please consider contributing to [Episcopal Relief and Development \(ERD\)](#) which is the official ministry of the Episcopal Church.



Check out this 'early bird' that popped up in Mother Deborah's and Michael's yard yesterday.



The deer in the church yard getting out of the way this morning before church started.



Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines
and Back Issues](#)

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines
for in-person worship](#)

In light of local conditions we request all persons wear masks inside the church building **regardless** of vaccination status.

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Masks are required.

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and

[Bishop Transition](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

gatherings but during office hours the thrift shop and chapel are available for individuals. Masks are required.

CrossRoads Café is temporarily closed.

Contact Information

For pastoral needs, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com.

To find out more about Good Shepherd and other matters, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at macbuck@yahoo.com.

For maintenance matters, please leave a note at the office or contact Dana Carlson, Junior Warden, at 740-664-2022 or by e-mail at carlsondana@hotmail.com.

For emergencies, please call The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895.

NON-emergency messages can be left on the church's answering machine (740-593-6877).

The parish office administrator is Barbara Martin (740-593-6877) or barbara@chogs.org.

[DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

The above takes you to the Parish page where you can find instructions or donate on-line via PayPal, If you have a preference, please indicate on the the "Add special instructions to the seller" section the purpose of the donation -- e.g. organ fund, plate collection, etc.

Check out the Church's [YouTube Channel](#).

LIKE us on Facebook [Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd 45701](#)

Office Hours:
Masks are required.

**The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd**, 64 University
Terrace, Athens OH 45701

740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org
www.chogs.org

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org

Blessings !

Church of the Good Shepherd | 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701

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